

**Storybird Cool Tools Session**  
**Summer Institute in Digital Literacy**  
**University of Rhode Island Feinstein Campus, July 14-19, 2013**

## **Digital Storytelling Made (Super!) Easy: Create Gorgeous, Illustrated Storybooks with *Storybird.com***

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**What is *Storybird*?** *Storybird* is an easy to use, highly engaging, web 2.0 platform for readers and digital storytellers of all ages. Even with limited digital skills anyone can create beautifully-illustrated storybooks in minutes. There is also an option to create poetry. *Storybird* curates original artwork from illustrators worldwide. Students choose the artwork they like, and by simply “clicking and dragging” they select the illustrations they want to use and then add their own text to create their personal storybook. *Storybird* is free (with upgraded services if you are willing/able to pay) and educators can set up secure, classroom accounts. These books are shareable and printable. They can be embedded in blogs or on a class web site, emailed to parents, and downloaded. For a fee, print versions can also be ordered. By joining, you and your students can become part of *Storybird's* global storytelling community. I introduced *Storybird* to nearly 100 teacher candidates at the University of Ottawa this year who were new to digital storytelling and they all LOVED IT!

### **How can I access Storybird.com?**

Go to: <http://storybird.com/accounts/signup/>

Three types of accounts are available: Regular, Teacher/class, and Kid/under 13.

### **Finished Examples:**

1. Adieu to Language Arts 2012 <http://storybird.com/books/adieu-to-language-arts-2012/>
2. Mr. Fish's Crazy Day <http://storybird.com/books/mrfishs-crazy-day/>
3. It Can be so Peaceful <http://storybird.com/books/it-can-be-so-peaceful/>

### **Overview of key features:**

#### **Online tutorials:**

1. Storybird Introduction for Educators, Part 1 (8:37) (By techteacher18)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30-o4dw8mPU>

Once a story has been published, it can be shared with others by email, through a link, or by embedding it in on a blog or a web site. To do this, click on the "share" button located on the bottom menu below the published story. If a story is NOT classified "private" it may also be shared on social networks such as Twitter and Facebook. You can also download the story in PDF to print or share on iPads or other devices, for \$1.99. Other hard copy options are also available.

2. To view on your own (Adding student accounts, adding assignments, moderating):  
Storybird Introduction for Educators, Part 2 (6:13) (By techteacher18)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2ObQygSDqE>

For **questions** about any of *Storybird's* features go to: <http://help.storybird.com>

### How to set up a Storybird account

1. Got to: [www.storybird.com](http://www.storybird.com)
2. Choose: "Sign up for free"
3. Choose account type
4. Type in required information (user name, email address, password)
5. Choose "Create" from the top menu after your account is set up
6. Browse the artwork in one of 3 ways:
  - a. by scrolling through the collections of illustrations;
  - b. by choosing a tag/keyword from the left menu; or
  - c. by searching for tags/keywords (on the bottom, left menu)
7. Choose the artwork you want to use by clicking on it.
8. Choose "Use this Art" (blue button on top, right hand side of the image)
9. Choose: "For a story"
10. Click and drag individual images from either side of the blank page onto the page
11. Add text
12. Select a cover for your storybook from the menu below your storybook. Note that only the "Classic" version is free, so choose that one

### ***Storybird.com* MINI-TASK (15 minutes)**

#### Task:

Create and share a short digital story using *Storybird.com*. Try to write 3-5 pages, including a cover for your storybook that has the title and name(s) of the author(s).

#### Instructions:

- Work independently or with a partner
- Create a *Storybird* account
- Briefly explore the options under *Create*
- Choose a set of illustrations and write a short digital story (be sure to SAVE)
- Share your story with a colleague or another pair
- If you are willing to share your story with the whole class email the link to your story to Diane at: [dadwattt@hotmail.com](mailto:dadwattt@hotmail.com)

### **REFLECTION (5 minutes)**

With a partner or in a small group brainstorm ideas in response to the following questions and record your responses on the colored card provided:

1. How might use Storybird with your own class (indicate grade level and subject areas)?
2. What might be some of the advantages and challenges of using Storybird with students?

Your ideas will be posted on our Cool Tools Wiki page for Storybird.com, so be sure to check back!

## Additional Resources

Boardman, D. (2007). Inside the digital classroom. In Thomas Newkirk & Richard Kent (Eds.), *Teaching the Neglected "R": Rethinking Writing Instruction in Secondary Classrooms*, pp. 162-171. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Dabbs, Lisa. (Edutopia). *Using StoryBird in the classroom*.  
<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/storybird-new-teacher-boot-camp-lisa-dabbs>

Hamilton, Paul (EduBlog). *Storybird: Anyone can Write Beautifully Illustrated Stories!*  
<http://paulhami.edublogs.org/2012/01/07/storybird-anyone-can-write-beautifully-illustrated-stories/>

Kajder, S. (2007). Plugging into Twenty-First Century Writers. In Thomas Newkirk & Richard Kent (Eds.), *Teaching the Neglected "R": Rethinking Writing Instruction in Secondary Classrooms*, pp. 149-161. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Kleinspiration (Blog). A reflection on using Storybird.  
<http://www.kleinspiration.com/2011/02/reflection-on-storybird.html>

Miller, Lisa (2007). Space to Imagine: Digital Storytelling. In Thomas Newkirk & Richard Kent (Eds.), *Teaching the Neglected "R": Rethinking Writing Instruction in Secondary Classrooms*, pp. 172-184. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Miller, Lisa (2010). *Make Me a Story: Teaching Writing Through Digital Storytelling*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Mrs. Watson's K/1/2/3 Class Web Site. *Collaborative Storybirds between Canada and New Zealand*  
<http://mrswatson.ca/2011/06/20/partner-storybirds-with-b4/>  
<http://openthedoortob4.blogspot.ca/2011/06/our-storybird-collaboration-with-canada.html>

Mr. Avery (An EduBlog). *Storybird: A Collaborative Storytelling Tool*  
<http://techtutorials.edublogs.org/2011/09/05/storybird/>

## Some Reasons to Teach Digital Storytelling

From: Lisa C. Miller (2010), *Make Me a Story: Teaching Writing Through Digital Storytelling*.

1. Digital storytelling engages and empowers reluctant readers and writers and different types of learners. It makes everyone want to write.
2. Digital storytelling projects can change how students see themselves and their classmates and can build community in the classroom.
3. Thinking about audience is an important part of the process and digital storytelling provides an authentic audience for student writers.
4. Digital storytelling projects do not have to be complicated to be effective.
5. Stories can be done across the curriculum.
6. The literacy process is the point; digital storytelling projects teach writing, reading, and digital skills.
7. The process draws on what students already know about storytelling (and moviemaking). Students today have a sophisticated knowledge about visual elements that can make a story effective.